

### **Bureau Moving Quickly to Erase Backlog And Acquire DNA Samples from Inmates**

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) met today with top officials from the federal Bureau of Prisons and was assured that efforts are moving ahead to erase a backlog of DNA samples waiting to be taken from inmates.

The Congressman was told that Bureau Director Harley Lappin this month asked for a review of Buchanan's recommendation that an inmate's history of violence be the highest priority in clearing its backlog so that criminals who represent the greatest public threat are profiled before they are released. Currently, the Bureau uses an inmate's release date as the primary factor in collecting the DNA sample.

Once the DNA sample is taken, the information is stored in the FBI's criminal database and used to identify and apprehend repeat offenders.

"I want to ensure law enforcement have the most up-to-date information available to apprehend suspects as quickly as possible," said Buchanan. "The ones who represent the greatest threat should have their DNA coding made available ahead of the others."

Buchanan said he was very pleased with the response he received today after meeting with BOP Assistant Director Thomas Kane and Chief of the Office of Legislative Affairs, Jennifer Edens.

The Bureau of Prisons has a backlog of approximately 125,000 DNA samples to be taken from convicted offenders currently in federal prisons. Samples are now taken from new offenders as they enter, which was something Buchanan discussed last year with officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

"That will give the FBI an early jump on entering the data in to their system," said Buchanan. "It will help ensure that the DNA is in the database tracking system before convicted criminals are released from jail."

Last year, the Congressman received assurances from the FBI that they are working to eliminate the backlog of already collected samples that have not been entered into the federal database. Increased funding and better technology will help the system get up to date.

A recent string of crimes in the Sarasota-Bradenton region and the apprehension of a suspect, Delmar Smith, who had served time in a federal prison, has underscored the need for improvements in the DNA database. Smith had provided DNA to federal authorities before his release from federal prison in September of 2008, but it was not entered into the FBI database because of a backlog created by personnel shortages.

Authorities have said that if Smith's DNA had been in the database, they might have apprehended him much sooner and prevented several violent crimes.

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